**Assistance to pest affected district Malkangiri, Orissa**

348. SHRI B.J. PANDA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that over 5000 families of farmers in the tribal dominated Malkangiri district of Orissa were in distress, on account of pest attacks on their crops which had, in turn, affected their livelihood; and

(b) whether the Centre has offered assistance to the cash-strapped State to compenstate the affected farmers; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) No, Sir. However there was an attack of Swarming Caterpillar in paddy and other crops in Malkangiri district of Orissa during Kharif 2003. The intensity of pest was low to moderate and severe in isolated fields. Out of an affected area of 20,990 ha., 16,685 ha. has been treated.

Experts Teams consisting of scientists from Central and State institutes/State Agriculture University and State Government, Central Integrated Pest Management Centre, Bhubaneswar visited the pest affected areas and suggested the necessary control measures for the pest. Necessary arrangements for supply and sale of pesticide and Plant Protection equipments (sprayers & dusters) to the affected farmers were made by the State Department of Agriculture.

Adequate steps have been taken by deploying Agriculture Officers from neighbouring districts to supervise the pest management operations. With the concerted efforts, the pest was brought under control by first week of September, 2003.

(b) State Government has granted a subsidy of Rs. 26,11,667 to the affected farmers for plant protection equipments and pesticides thereby providing 1775 sprayers, 11,206 liters of chloropyriphos and 12 Metric Tonnes of Methyl Parathion dust in Malkangiri districts. Further, the State Government has also supplied rabi crops seeds on subsidized rate to the affected farmers with the subsidy amount of Rs. 30,99,978. Thus, the total subsidy provided to the affected farmers of Malkangiri district has reached to Rs. 57,11,645.